

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SY-05

USSS-00 /060 W

----- 006190

R 262112Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5395

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2738

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, ASEC, AR

SUBJECT: GENERAL VIDELA BEGINS TO CONTROL RIGHT-WING TERRORISM?

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2528

1. FOLLOWING VIDELA MEETING WITH SENIOR GENERALS IN WHICH HE MADE CLEAR HIS DESIRE THAT RIGHT-WING TERRORISM BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL (REF A), LEGATT SOURCES REPORT THAT CORPS COMMANDERS, TAKING VIDELA'S ADMONITIONS TO HEART, CRACKED DOWN ON POLICE UNITS WHICH HAD BEEN CARRYING OUT EXTRALEGAL REPRISALS AGAINST SUSPECTED TERRORISTS. ARMY OFFICERS WENT SO FAR AS TO REMOVE FROM POLICE CONTROL THOSE ARRESTED TERRORISTS WHO SHOWED SIGNS OF MALTREATMENT, TRANSFERRING THEM TO MILITARY BASES WHERE THEY ARE NOW RECEIVING PROPER MEDICAL ATTENTION. IN ADDITION, MILITARY COMMANDERS ARE NOW ENGAGED IN PRODUCING ON PRIORITY BASIS COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN DETAINED ON POLITICAL, SUBVERSIVE OR CORRUPTION CHARGES SINCE COUP. WHILE UNDER PRESSURE FROM VIDELA TO PRODUCE LIST BY END OF THIS WEEK, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THERE MAY BE SOME SLIPPAGE AS MILITARY COMMANDERS TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE PERSONS ORIGINALLY LISTED AS ARRESTED BY POLICE BUT NOW UNACCOUNTED FOR.

2. ON APRIL 23 A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED THAT IN THE FUTURE THE PRESS COULD NOT, WITHOUT PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FROM

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THE GOVERNMENT, PUBLISH ACCOUNTS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS OR PUBLISH

REPORTS ABOUT BODIES FOUND AND PRESUMED TO BE THE WORK OF SOME TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. THE SPOKESMAN WHO RELEASED THIS INFORMATION NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT FELT ITSELF TO BE "IN A STATE OF WAR" AND WAS TAKING THIS ACTION TO DENY TERRORISTS PUBLICITY THEY NEED TO KEEP THEIR MOVEMENTS GOING. IT WAS NOT, HE EMPHASIZED, RELATED TO ANY BROADER ISSUE OF PRESS CENSORSHIP.

3. COMMENT: FACT THAT ARMY COMMANDERS HAVE MOVED TO CURB RIGHT-WING VIOLENCE AND HAVE GONE SO FAR AS TO ACT AGAINST POLICE SEEN AS VERY ENCOURAGING SIGN BY POLITICAL OBSERVERS. EMBASSY POLITICAL CONTACTS ACROSS BROAD SPECTRUM OF PARTIES CONTINUE TO VOICE THEIR "SURPRISE" THAT MILITARY ACTING IN SUCH MODERATE MANNER. WITH REGARD TO PRESS, REPORTING OF TERRORISM IS CAUSING CONCERN AS OBSERVERS WAIT TO SEE HOW THIS NEW ACTION WILL WORK OUT IN PRACTICE.

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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